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THE PACIFIC JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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The Pacific Journal of Theology

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EDITOR

The Rev. Clarence E. Norwood,
Box 184, Apia, Western Samoa, South Pacific

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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British Solomon Islands.
The Rev. Ramsay Deoki,
Fiji.
The Rev. Kenape Faletose,
Western Samoa.
The Rev. H. W. Figgess,
Fiji.
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New Caledonia.
The Rev. Egi Raka,
Papua.
The Rev. Setareki A. Tuilovoni,
Fiji.

CIRCULATION MANAGER

The Rev. Clarence E. Norwood,
Box 184, Apia, Western Samoa, South Pacific

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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FROM THE EDITOR — a Personal note

As was briefly intimated in the Double Number, which was sent out at the end of July, the Continuation Committee have asked me to accept the responsibility of editing the Pacific Journal of Theology. This is in addition to my duties as Circulation Manager. Perhaps therefore I may be permitted to write just this once in a personal strain. Henceforward, I shall use the Editorial "We."

As a Minister of a good many years standing in English Congregationalism, I rather expected that strange experiences might come to my wife and me when we accepted the missionary vocation. But the strangest of strange experiences is that I should find myself placed in the Editorial Chair of a Theological Journal. I can only say that I will do my best to make the Journal a mirror of the Christian life in the changing Pacific world. It is my hope that the Journal may continue to be used to interpret the Churches to one another.

I claim no sort of expertness either in Theology or in the Cultures of the Pacific and will lean heavily on those wiser and better informed than I am. In saying this I am making a most urgent plea for contributions from members of Churches that sent delegates to the great Conference at Malua in 1961.

That Conference made a big impression on all who attended it, and even upon those of us who were only on its fringe. Now we are mid-way between the Conferences of 1961 and 1966. It is because I believe in that forthcoming Conference that I have felt constrained to accept the challenge to serve as your Editor.

I want to use this Journal as one of the instruments of preparation. You will observe that this issue contains the text of Questionnaires that are being circulated among the Churches in order to stimulate thought. For this material I am indebted, not only to those who prepared the Questionnaires, but to the Rev. Vavae Toma for making them available. I am indebted to him also for the report on the meeting of the Continuation Committee at Lae in April last and for his article, "Like a Nomad in the Pacific."

As one who now has some small share in Theological Education, I am a believer in the Pacific Theological College. The College Council will be meeting next month [September] and will have the duty of making the appointment of the first Principal. We must all pray that they will be enabled to discern the Will of God. As soon as the appointment is announced, I shall ask the new Principal to use the columns of the Journal to take the Churches of the Pacific into his confidence as to his hopes for the training of Ministers in the new College.

Within recent weeks, two new Methodist Conferences have been inaugurated. It was a privilege to meet, among other distinguished guests, the President General of the Methodist Church in Australia. He has promised me an article containing his impressions of the inaugural services and ceremonies in Fiji and in Samoa. We hope to print it in our next issue.

An Editor likes to receive correspondence that may be printed. We shall not take very kindly to the letter over a *nom-de-plume*, believing that if a man has something worth while to say he should say it over his own name. In cases where opinions expressed are controversial, I shall try to see that the opposing point of view is also presented in our columns.

Book Reviews will continue to be published and these will not be confined to religious works. We shall hope to include reviews of books and periodicals of general interest to those who live and work in the Pacific.

So the Journal sets out on a new stage in its life. I would record my own gratitude to our founder-editor, the Rev. Dr. Bradshaw; and to the Rev. John Wilton who succeeded him. May I ask that our readers will do all they can to support the Editorial Committee and the Editor. May I conclude by quoting a prayer which the United Society for Christian Literature asks its friends to use.

O Lord, grant that there may never be wanting men and women with consecrated gifts who, by the use of pen and

pencil, shall set forth the way of life and the beauty of holiness, till all come to know Thee from the least to the greatest, through Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

May the Lord continue to call forth such men and women and may some of them use the pages of this Journal to set forth the way of life as it is to be lived here in the Pacific. Here also, amid so much else of beauty, may they set forth the beauty of holiness.

CLARENCE E. NORWOOD.

THE MEETING OF THE CONTINUATION COMMITTEE

The group of church leaders appointed in 1961 to continue the studies of the Samoa Conference of Churches and Missions in the Pacific, met for the third time since the Conference, at Lae, New Guinea from 22nd. to 27th. April. The group called the Continuation Committee, is so composed that although its membership is limited to six, the Lutheran, Congregational, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations are all represented, and at the same time territorial representation is well spread, in that members come from Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Solomon Islands and New Guinea.

At the meeting just concluded, great interest centred around the planning for another Conference of the Churches 1966. There has been a growing awareness of spheres of mutual interest among many of the churches since 1961, and several have had close contact with a view to some united action. It is hoped that the Conference in 1966 will bring the widely-scattered Christian communities of the Pacific into closer bonds of friendship and that there will be new projects for cooperation arising therefrom.

In some areas, there are already inter-Church efforts, proposed by the Continuation Committee. In August this year youth leaders from many churches will gather for a Conference in Western Samoa in an effort to increase the effectiveness of youth work in the churches. Inter-church visits have been arranged to improve the understanding between churches of mutual problems. The current exchanges of visits involve New Caledonia and Fiji, the Caroline and Marshall Islands and Samoa, New Guinea and Tonga, and others will follow later.

The Continuation Committee is closely linked with the World Council of Churches and was pleased to learn of two new projects being sponsored by the W.C.C. within the Pacific. In Tahiti a hostel for young women living in Papeete is being subsidised,

and in the New Hebrides a Christian Bookshop is to be established at Vila, helped by W.C.C. funds. It was most heartening to the committee to find such increasing evidence of the development of ecumenical co-operation throughout the Pacific.

STUDIES FOR THE NEXT CONFERENCE

The Secretary of the Continuation Committee, the Rev. Vavae Toma, has kindly supplied us with these questionnaires on various subjects. They have been sent to the Churches in the Pacific in preparation for the next Conference.

EDITOR.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP.

One of the subjects to be studied during the next Conference of Pacific Churches is "Stewardship." In order to prepare relevant papers for the Commission on Stewardship to study, it is necessary to understand what is already being done in our churches regarding stewardship, and I would be grateful if you will answer the following questions. Most of the questions allow of a "Yes" or "No" answer, but if you can possibly add comments and fuller details, please do so.

A. The Meaning of Stewardship:

1. Is the principle of stewardship as a trusteeship of God's gifts accepted and understood by leaders and/or people in your congregations?
2. Has your Church conducted any sort of study of stewardship for local purposes?
3. What study book did you use?

B. Stewardship and Property:

1. Is there an increasing desire on the part of your people to "own" things?
2. Was the traditional ownership communal, with little incentive for or interest in amassing property?
3. What sorts of things were "personal property" before Christian times?
4. What sort of things are being sought after today?
5. Do people tend to put these "things" before the needs of people, e.g. families or community affairs?
6. Are old and sick people freely supplied with the necessities of life?
7. Is there a tendency to regard money as an end in itself?

8. Do wealthier people exploit poorer people for their own selfish ends?
9. Is there a spirit of covetousness or jealousy even among Christian people because of the business activities or land ownership of settlers from other countries?
10. Is there a tradition in your country of giving presents without thought of receiving something in return, or does a gift imply a return gift?
11. Do people express disappointment at the value of gifts received in return?
12. Is money given to help the work of the church offered in a spirit of thanksgiving for God's blessings, or is it regarded as a kind of tax?
13. Do all people have money to give, or do some give food or labour?
14. Is there a system of tithing in your church?
15. If so, does this tend to limit what people give rather than encouraging them to give generously?
16. Have you any special means of raising money which reflects the principle of stewardship?

C. Stewardship and Work:

1. Is work simply a means of getting enough food and other necessities of life among your people?
2. Do people work cheerfully to increase community or church facilities?
3. Is there a tradition of "workdays" for the church which still functions?
4. Do people recognise work as part of our stewardship, and "labour" as part and parcel of our life?
5. Do people recognise that a Christian carpenter is equally a servant of God as a catechist or pastor?
6. Is some work regarded as too lowly or dirty for Christians?
7. Is it necessary to supervise work if you want work well done?
8. Do workmen stop the job as soon as the "master" is out of sight?

d. Stewardship of the Mind:

1. Are church and community problems well thought out and discussed?
2. Is the church studying carefully, the changes taking place in the life of the community and church, and relating this to the Gospel it proclaims?
3. Do young people ask searching questions on Gospel truths?

4. Do church leaders meet these questions with considered teaching or do they simply quote Scripture?
5. Is there a conscious effort to seek out truth in all aspects of life?
6. What evidences is there in church or community life that truth is not the guiding principle in people's thinking today?

E. Stewardship of Body:

1. Is it generally recognised that physical fitness is a state which we strive for as servants of God?
2. What abuses of the human body are spoiling fitness in your country?
3. Do Christians regard preventive treatments for malaria, T.B., polio, or other such sicknesses as part of the stewardship of our bodies?
4. Are athletic sports, drill at school, games etc. frowned upon as frivolous or supported as useful to promote fitness of body?

F. Stewardship and Witnessing:

1. In what ways do Christians spoil their witness by not being true stewards?
2. What avenues of personal witness are emphasised by your church as part of our normal stewardship of the Gospel?
3. Is the witness of parents in the home regarded as a responsibility under stewardship?
4. Do people tend to think that they discharge their responsibility to witness when they have given money for evangelical work?

A. G. Horwell.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHURCH AND CUSTOM

1. What is the Church's attitude towards Bride Price?
 - a. Should this be completely abolished?
 - b. Should it be allowed but regulated so that excessive amounts are not asked for?
 - c. Should peoples concerned be left to ask what they like?
 - d. Is it considered that the abolishing of the bride price would interfere with local economies?
2. What attitude should be taken in regard to prohibited degrees of marriage as established by local custom? Sometimes the custom law is stricter than that of the Government and the Church. What action should the Church take?
3. What opinion has the Church regarding arranged marriages by parents or close relations of the parties concerned?

4. What is the Church's teaching about native dances. Should such be encouraged provided they keep within the bounds of morality and Christian example?
5. What action does the Church take in respect of feasts?
 - a. In the case of burial feasts, or on the anniversaries of deaths?
 - b. Is the teaching of S. Paul as stated in the Epistle to the Corinthians the standard that Christians should take in regard to attendance at feasts held in connection with the offering of sacrifices?
 - c. Is the 'new' custom of expensive feasts on special occasions a good example by Christian people?
6. Should the custom of tatooing be abolished on the grounds that such defaces the body as created by God, and also that such is an act of cruelty causing much pain?
7. What is the Church's opinion on ceremonies of initiation? Should only those of a Christian nature be observed?
8. What is the Church doing for the perpetuation of good customs such as native handicraft and healthy dances?
9. With the establishment of local councils and local government what should be done for retaining of hereditary chiefs, realising that respect and obedience to such has often done much for the social welfare of the people?
10. What should the Church do towards the raising of the status of women, especially in areas where custom has placed them in a subservient position?
11. With regard to the use of native medicines what teaching should be given? It is recognised that sometimes such medicines can be beneficial and at other times harmful resulting in death?
12. What action is the Church taking in regard to the wearing of charms as a preventive to sickness or as an armour against the fear of evil spirits?
13. Is the Church taking a strong enough view against acts of sorcery which often lead to sickness or death of the person concerned?
14. There are many cases of fatalism, the result of old beliefs, in the lives of first generation Christians. How should the Church deal with such cases?
15. In some areas there is a multiplicity of languages. Is it considered a wise action to substitute such with the English language, or is it considered that in doing so, much of the original culture of the people is being lost?

H. V. C. Reynolds.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHURCH ON CITIZENSHIP:

1. What is your country? An Island? A group of islands? The one you live in? The one your forefathers lived in?
2. Is all well in your country? Is there nothing that could be done to improve living conditions, to make them fairer to all, to improve education, to improve roads to facilitate the transport of agricultural produce [copra, coffee, cocoa, bananas] on which you depend for your living, to improve medical care in hospitals, in other words to give everyone better living conditions? Is this only the concern of the Government, or is it also the concern of all citizens [your own in particular]?
3. Can [or should] Christians concern themselves with these things, or should they be concerned only with the Kingdom of God? Can they "go into politics"?
4. When elections take place, can the Church advise on the best candidates to vote for? Can the Church back up a political party?
5. Can the Church advise the Government?
6. In respect of politics do you make a difference between the attitude of a Christian and the attitude of the Church as a whole?

M. Pont.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHURCH AND EDUCATION

1. Why is it necessary to educate your people?
2. How does education affect the life of the people?
3. What would be the difference between the educated person and the uneducated one?
4. How many parts of the body should we to educate?
5. Why do some people want to be educated in English?
6. Have the people hunger of education?
7. What would be the difference of learning God's words and other subjects?
8. What would be the main thoughts to receive the education?
9. Are many educated ones interested in helping others?
10. Why is education an important thing?

Stahl Mileng.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHURCH AND MARRIAGE:

The call comes to us all in the Pacific to rethink about family life. Not because of economic presure, nor the changing world

but because we call ourselves Christians and thereby claim the Sovereignty of Christ over all the details of family life. The foundation of a Christian family is Christ. The husband and wife are the human foundation of a family. Christian Marriage is fundamentally a marriage of Christians. Marriage is not necessarily "Christian" because it is solemnized in the Church, but essentially because the two partners to this union are believing Christian, who have Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and therefore as the norm and standard of their lives.

1. For the Christian Churches today in the Pacific what, if anything, can convert a customary marriage into Christian Marriage?
2. Do many Christian people in your Church prefer customary marriage to marriage in church? If so, why?
3. Bride Price is incompatible with the Christianity. How is your Church dealing with this practice?
4. While it is natural and understandable to want to give one's daughter a big wedding:-
 - [a] Is it really Christian to have such a display of food at a marriage that it means that the families are in debt for a long time?
 - [b] Is it Christian to supply a free bar of alcoholic drinks on the solemn though joyous occasion of a feast?
5. Christ taught the sacredness of human personality, Is it right that a human being should be handed out — like a parcel of clothes — for someone else to care for?
6. "The responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the consciences of parents everywhere: that this planning, in such ways as are mutually acceptable is a right and important factor Christian family life and should be the result of positive choice before God."

[Quoted in RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD AND THE POPULAR PROBLEM].

- What is the attitude of your Church towards family planning?
7. What is the attitude of your Church to a divorced person? Should the Church allow the divorced to marry again?
 8. How can family life enrich Church life in your own country?

F. Mataafa.

LIKE A NOMAD IN THE PACIFIC.

by Vavae Toma.

There are hundreds and hundreds of inhabited islands scattered here and there in the Pacific Ocean. People who live on

them are very isolated from one another not only by distance but by the different languages they speak and by their cultures. Nomadic life in the Pacific, therefore, is not an easy thing to undertake. It is very difficult and very costly. It needs a heart that is prepared for it, money to help it, and prayers to uphold it.

For about three years now I have been wandering like a nomad in the Pacific visiting the churches. In doing this I have had a crowded experience. The interesting things I wanted to share with friends were recorded in my written reports which have been considered by the Continuation Committee of the Conference of the Pacific Churches, and they were sent to churches for information.

I am very grateful to the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches for providing funds from time to time which enable me to wander among the churches in the Pacific. I am also grateful to the churches which I have visited for their help to me in many ways during my wandering among them, and for all the friends who pray for this particular task in the Pacific.

The chief purpose of this responsibility is not to look for new lands or for sightseeing, but to bring into being that which was laid down in the 1961 Conference of Churches and Missions in the Pacific - "...this secretary would live in the area and travel throughout it and so be a living link between the churches." In my own interpretation, this resolution means to me that this secretary is like a nomad in the Pacific.

Having started my nomadic life, Samoa was the starting point of every visit I paid. From there, I went eastward to Tahiti in January 1962 wandering around the Church there. After that I went southwestward through Fiji to New Caledonia to attend the annual meeting of the Continuation Committee of the Conference of the Pacific Churches in March of the same year, held in Noumea. Then in August and September of the same year. I again left home land to go to the north and then northwestward in order to visit the churches in the Caroline and Marshall Islands. After this I left again when I went westward to visit the churches in Papua-New Guinea in November and December, 1962, and in January of 1963. In April 1963 I went to the southwest again to participate at the next annual meeting of the Continuation Committee of the Conference of Pacific Churches in Honiara in the Solomon Islands. In September, I went to

the southeast to visit the Church in the Cook Islands, and in October I went southward visiting the churches in Tonga. This year, 1964, I went first to attend another annual meeting of the Continuation Committee of the Conference of the Pacific Churches which was held in Lae, New Guinea; and in July and August I go northwestward again to visit the churches in the Ellice and Gilbert Islands. Apart from this nomadic life in the Pacific, I also, at the same time, had been directed to widen the boundaries of my travel. I went to India in November 1961, to observe at the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, and to Switzerland to attend meetings of various committees of the World Council of Churches in Geneva; also to Germany, France, England and U.S.A. in 1962, and to Mexico City for the meeting of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the W.C.C. in November and December 1963. On my way to Switzerland I happened to call at Jerusalem to see some of the holy shrines kept by Christians there to mark the special places where the Holy Nomad of nomads had done His work for our salvation.

As I was away in all these places in the Pacific and beyond the Pacific, I felt the acute pain of leaving behind the family for long periods and several times, but at the same, I had a great joy in my nomadic life, when I found in meeting churches and friends old and new, the whole truth of one of our Christian conceptions of the Church that She is the great Family in Jesus Christ. Therefore, I am a nomad in the family.

SOME TENSIONS OF THE MINISTRY IN THE PACIFIC TODAY.

In many of our island groups today there is a serious tension within the fellowship of the Church because the old people believe that new fashions and modern attractions are drawing the young people away from the Christian life. The Pastor is embroiled in the problems of this situation, because on the one hand he is often of the older generation himself and appreciates fully the exact nature of the fears of the old people, but on the other hand he knows that the leadership of the Church must some day pass to these young people, and he wishes to prepare them for their tasks. He cannot lose them, every one of the sheep must be cared for, and so he enters into the struggle. Youth work must be developed to direct the energies and interests of the young people into channels of worthwhile study, service and recreation, but to do this it is necessary to overcome the doubts of the older people, and this requires much discussion, explanation, tact

and patience. Progress will certainly be slower than we will like, but we will feel happier to know that all are knit together in this family situation, than to see two separate groups within the Christian community. It would be very easy for the Pastor to lose himself altogether in youth work these days, there is so much to be done and the pressures are so insistent. We could fill our days with youth activities or preparations for them, but our work is a pastoral work and there are many sheep, all with their needs and we dare not neglect some for the gratification of the others. How frequently we need to pray to God for help in carrying out a proper stewardship of our time. This aspect of the Ministry will involve the Pastor in much study, because he must be thoroughly informed about youth organisations and their programmes, and he must be constantly appraising the traditional culture and even the Christian heritage which has arisen, so that they may be related soundly to the Gospel message in the world of today.

It is becoming clearer to everyone these days that politics as such are now becoming an integral part of Pacific Island life. Elections in New Guinea, Western Samoa and New Caledonia raise many questions in the minds of our people and whether he likes it or not, the Pastor is involved in these new developments. Of course he has always been involved in the village politics. It has been a difficulty of varying proportions for many pastors, because some have been chiefs in their own right before being ordained and they have carried over a prestige and authority from that position, whilst others have been faced with the resistance of chiefly opinion in what are really Church matters. There remains this tension which was so clear in the Ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was surrounded by the intrigues which aimed to make Him a king, and the aspirations of the ones who wished to see themselves in positions of power. Again we find light and strength for our problem if we remember that we are called to be pastors to God's people. The chief or policeman or District officer in the congregation is a needy soul with his own task to do in the complicated affairs of government and we cannot separate him from the flock. Neither can we separate ourselves from the world and all its problems. We must be informed of duties, policies, and problems in this part of life also, and relate them to the message of the Gospel. We must assist these who are assailed probably more than we are by the "cosmic powers" spoken of by St. Paul, so that they may "Stand firm!" [Ephesians 6:12-14].

There is a world-wide struggle going on today for education. In every country and certainly within all the territories which we

know well, this struggle is entering into wider fields of interest. In the minds of many of our people this grasping after knowledge or improvement in living conditions, this seeking after greater prestige or power, is not clearly understood. Often it is just a matter of following where others lead. We know all too well that many people seem content to stay as they are, and to maintain standards of conduct and living which relate to a different age. Changes come and we cannot ignore them, but many difficulties arise because there is no sound educational plan to accompany the changes. The Pastor is in the centre of this ferment in our island groups, and whether consciously or unconsciously, he is engaged in the harvesting of the fruits of mission and Church activities over many decades. The teaching of the earliest missionaries and teachers began this process of change both in these islands and in Africa. Often the emphasis understood by the hearers in those classes seemed to involve changes which would Europeanise them and many accepted this with some unfortunate losses in culture and individuality. Today there are cargo cults, messianic movements and other similar manifestations of dissatisfaction which impinge on the work of the Pastor. He understands the reaching out for the blessings of life but does want this to follow violent or un-Christian patterns. He has to be clear as to the purpose which God has for His people. As we see it explained by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, God's hidden purpose has been revealed in Christ, and He wants all men to become one in Christ. [Eph. 1:10] We may understand our part in this education if we turn ourselves firmly towards achieving this purpose. We have to direct our energies to relating the desires and changes and pressures of the day to a struggle for this unity in Christ; whatever our impression of the seeming progress which goes on around us, whatever the seeming desirability of improved standards of living, we constantly to life. We have to relate the blessings of His grace and love to the responsibility of our stewardship of these gifts. Our thanksgiving for the riches of an improved education for life in this world, and especially any advances which are made in theological education for example, must express itself in greater and greater effort to proclaim the Gospel and bring men into unity with Christ. I am lost, I serve mammon, if my learning lifts me up above my people or prevents me from understanding them and their needs, or weakens my presentation of the Gospel.

This brings us to another point of great tension in our Ministry. How can we keep a balance between the evangelistic task we are called upon to perform, and the nurturing and feeding of

the sheep in steady daily care? We can so easily look down the roll of names on the congregational list, and concentrate on supplying their needs. It is a full time job too. The youth work already mentioned, the visits to sick and old people, the classes for the preparation of people who wish to come to the Sacraments, the daily round and common task of this pastoral ministry will occupy all our time, and somehow the evangelistic element in our ministry will devolve into an occasional stir-up for the members of the congregation. A company of Christians may not live unto itself, and the leadership of the pastor is failing if he is not arousing in the hearts and minds of his people the need for stewardship of the gifts, the blessings, the riches of God's grace. There must be a going out - and this may be stimulated by prayers for the heathen or money for the mission work - but these reasonable services which we render are dulled if there is no active witness and reaching out after the ones who do not know Christ. We were reminded of the unlimited avenues of evangelism which are around us here in the Pacific islands today. Our task does not become limited as the tribes of bush people receive the Word of God and are baptised. We have concentrated perhaps too long on this aspect of evangelism which appeals to the imagination and arouses ready help in finance and prayers. We are called also to the lapsed, the ignorant, the indifferent, who are alongside us. Even in the most settled communities there are avenues for evangelism. People adrift, working in towns or on plantations or ships, other races of people living and working with us, the growing number who follow the heresies of the sects. How can this busy pastor find time to go to these needy? He has a full time job amongst his steady congregation. He will only do it if he first convinces his own people that this task of evangelism involves them too. If they join him in the proclamation of the Gospel, they will be prepared to relieve him of some duties to allow him time for the going-out. If the pastor himself feels a compulsion such as Jeremiah expressed, evangelism will follow the true path of its expression. "If I say, I will not mention Him or speak any more in His name, there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." [Jer. 20:9]

In many reports and discussions today which concern the Ministry, we find greater emphasis upon the Minister's devotional life. We acknowledge this important part of our life in Christ, we know it is essential, and then we go back to the duties of the day and the week, and before we know it, we have become engaged in a whirl of work which occupies every waking moment. The

tasks themselves are in the line of our Christian service, and we realise that some are neglected because time does not permit us to do all that we are asked to do, but slowly and surely the springs of faith, power and love are being cut off by the busyness of the days. To all outward appearances we are doing a wonderful job of work - the seven day week labourers - what is the reality? So many of us are tied to high pressure programmes that we give the impression that WE are the important people in the Church instead of Christ. Whatever else is neglected, we may never neglect our prayers and Bible reading. If we wish to know the mind of Christ, if we want to study the purpose of God for our people today in the problems of today, if we want to express from our pulpits and in the homes of our people the truth of God's Word for today, then we must constantly be in communion with Him and regularly study and meditate on His Word. Only then will the witness which we make be clear, that we are Christ's, servants of our Lord, one in Him, speaking His Word, working in His strength, and proclaiming salvation only in Him, our Lord and our Saviour.

A. G. Horwell.

INTRODUCING OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

J. N. Schofield, London: S. C. M. Press

Since we have seen only the final revelation of God in Christ but we have no final interpretation of it [no final Theology] and since the written record of that revelation, the Bible, is affected to a certain extent by modern Archeological and Historical research, the need to write and re-write Theology will last as long as there are men on this globe who think about God and his relation to man.

It is natural that whenever we are confronted with a very hard or wide subject which is sometimes frightening to our thinking we want someone with a great knowledge and clear understanding of the subject to introduce it to us. To all of us who are confronted with this very wide subject, Schofield has offered a great deal of help.

In this short very readable book the author handles the subject in a way that will meet the need of Old Testament students. The line of thought taken by the author runs thus. He starts with the written record, namely the Old Testament, or the Hebrew canon called by the Jews themselves "The Law the Prophets and the Writings". Then he goes on to say something about the middle men who tried to interpret the events contained in this

written record. This section concludes with a short word about the difficulty we face concerning the dating of the Old Testament writings. This is because we only have a number of varying theories held by the scholars which are not proven facts. Sometimes though not often a writers arguments or conclusions about Old Testament Theology are affected by this problem of dating.

In the second section the author presents God as the "God Who Acts" in history. He acted in creation; He acted and still does in sustaining His creation; He acted when fellowship between himself and man was broken. He acted through Abraham. He acted in delivering His people from Egypt. He acted in establishing a covenant relationship between Himself and men based upon the Law. This God who acts in a personal way is the Holy God Whose Holiness according to the Hebrew mind is terrible. Therefore the unworthy people trembled in His presence when they drew near to Him.

In the third section God is pictured as the God who speaks. Here the reader is reminded first of all about the Hebrew conception of "words" To the Hebrews there is no clear distinction between action and words. Words to them are not mere sounds but far more than that. When a word is spoken, it is done. Both word and event can translate the same Hebrew word. So the difference between the God who acts and the God who speaks is partly artificial. However in the Old Testament God was thought of as speaking in a special way through His servant the prophet. The word Prophet is used here in the wide sense that will include not only the canonical prophets but all those in the Old Testament through, whom God spoke to His people 'God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets.' [Hebrews I]

The fourth section then is a discussion on God's kinship with man. The great God Who acts in creation and in history who speaks to and through the prophets words of moral condemnation, comfort and hope can be called Father. This discussion touches upon the so called Jewish corporate personality. The father of the family is its representative. Whatever the father does involves his whole family. The same thing applies to the father of a tribe or the leader of a whole nation. In other words there is oneness between the father and all his people. In a sense the Old Testament could speak of God as part of the community that is under His rule. On the other hand the Old Testament does not in presenting the idea of corporate Personality ignore the reality of individual responsibility which is clearly seen in the teaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The popular proverb

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" shall no more be used by you in Israel.

"the soul that sins shall die" Ezek 18 [Jer 31] God does not punish the children unto the third or fourth generation for their fathers' sins. Each person will be punished for his own sins.

The God Who acts, the God Who speaks, and the God Who has fellowship with man is also the God of Glory. The last section of the book is a discussion on "The God of Glory - God's glory or beauty of holiness is something that defies description and makes language totally inadequate. The Hebrew word translated "glory" can be used of human splendour as in the case of Joseph's splendour in Egypt.

When the world is used of God it is thought of as a great light or devouring fire. His presence is so intense and brilliant in the Tabernacle that neither Moses nor the priests could enter. The same kind of thing was seen at the giving of the Law.

Perhaps we must admit that we do not know whether those who wrote the stories were using language as conscious symbols. Whatever the description we give to this kind of priestly experience we ought to realise the glory of God is not independent of man. Though the heavens declare it - man must make it known God requires from man the recognition of His glory as men praise Him in corporate worship. It is possible that a ritual was observed at Temple festivals in Jerusalem when the gates of the temple were bidden to lift up their heads that the King of Glory might enter. Man must give glory to God not only in worship as he praises Him but also in life and particularly in the face of life's problems and disasters. Jesus himself said that suffering was not caused by the sins of man or his parents but that God should be glorified. In glorifying God man finds the true meaning and purpose of his life. This is like the beginning of the Shorter Catechism - "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever."

O. F.

FACING THE FACTS: Nineteen Personal

**Testimonies introduced by W. F. Batt
London, Inter-Varsity Fellowship**

Here we have nineteen life stories or Testimonies. A very varied collection. Testamonies, even the best, can only be partial. One is surprised at some of the backgrounds - the well meaning parents who so carefully train their child's body and mind but leave its soul to 'decide for itself' - as it were. Too

often God is brought down to fit an already planned existence - 'Too often the whole vision of Christ and His demands are too small - One longs for a Job to cry - 'Yea though he slay me yet will I trust him!' The young man who was guided Not to go into the Christian ministry but to serve God as a successful Government official and the lonely spinister who made her home a place of joy and comfort for many appealed more to the reviewer. No doubt all readers will have a different choice.

M. M. N.

MASSEY, 1964

Nigel M. Watson

**National Council of Churches
in New Zealand,**

'It is notoriously difficult for those who have attended a great Ecumenical Conference to share its full significance with those who were not present!' So writes the secretary of the Conference Rev. D. M. Taylor. This should be borne in mind as one reads this brief account of Massey'64. About the Bible study groups he says - 'It is in Ecumenical Bible study that I have come to see how fragmentary is my own understanding of the Gospel.' I am sure his book will deepen our own understanding of the importance of this type of Conference.

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- 2/ The Relation between the Gospel and History.
- 3/ The Relation between the Gospel and other religions.
- 4/ The Relation between the Gospel and the Contemporary Scientific World.

It spite of much discussion and many debates all four reports were finally approved by the whole Conference, This was quite a remarkable feat when one remembers the very varied backgrounds of the people present.

M. M. N.

I BELIEVE IN GOD

K. Runia

London, Tyndale Press

This is great little book covering a vast field in its seventy seven pages. Starting with the Creeds - their origin and history - which will be new to far too many of us who have rejoiced on many occasions in the great reiterations of our Faith, one must

in passing note too the beautifully simple, but quite adequate explanation of the Doctrine of the Trinity! 'In the 17th Century we see the rise of Rationalism. This placed human reason in the centre of all things and regarded this reason as capable of judging all things even religion.' Then in the 19th Century Liberalism could not accept the Gospel as proclaimed in the New Testament. This led to many attacks on the Creeds. So today the rise of the New Liberalism where the Gospel itself is at stake 'The whole message of Christianity has to be translated in categories that modern man can understand' The New Testament is largely Mythology - so say Rudolf Bulman, Paul Tillich Much of their teaching is written in Robinsons 'Honest to God.'

Dr. Runia deals faithfully and firmly with these ideas and finally sums up in the Relevance of the Creeds to day: Here it is said that if we remove 'the mythology from the Gospel then the Creeds would have to be re-written and we would be left with very little to proclaim. He ends by warning us against mere traditionalism and by calling us all to "learn from Bultman and Tillich even if it is only that they compel us to re-think the terms we so often thoughtlessly use.

M. M. N.

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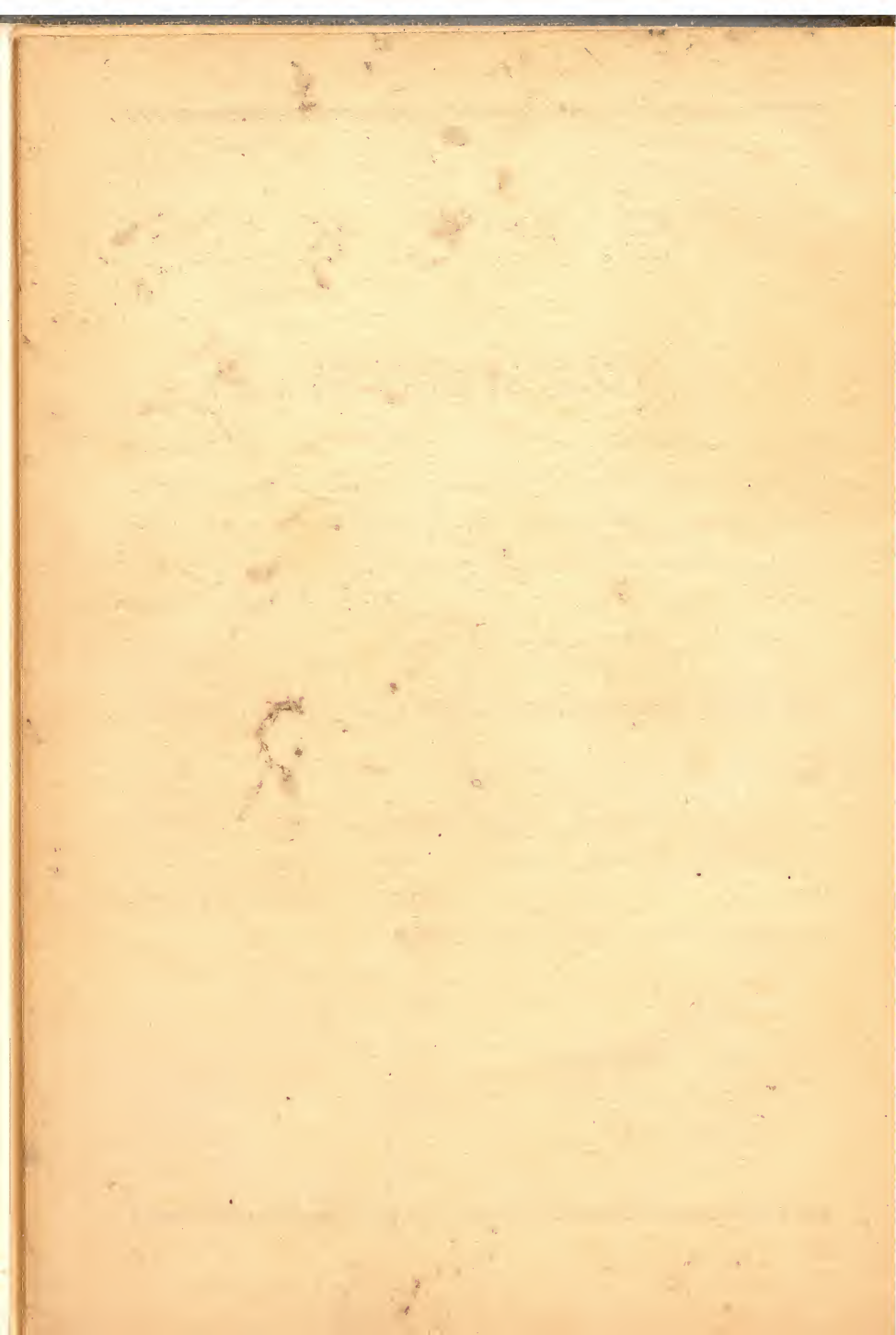
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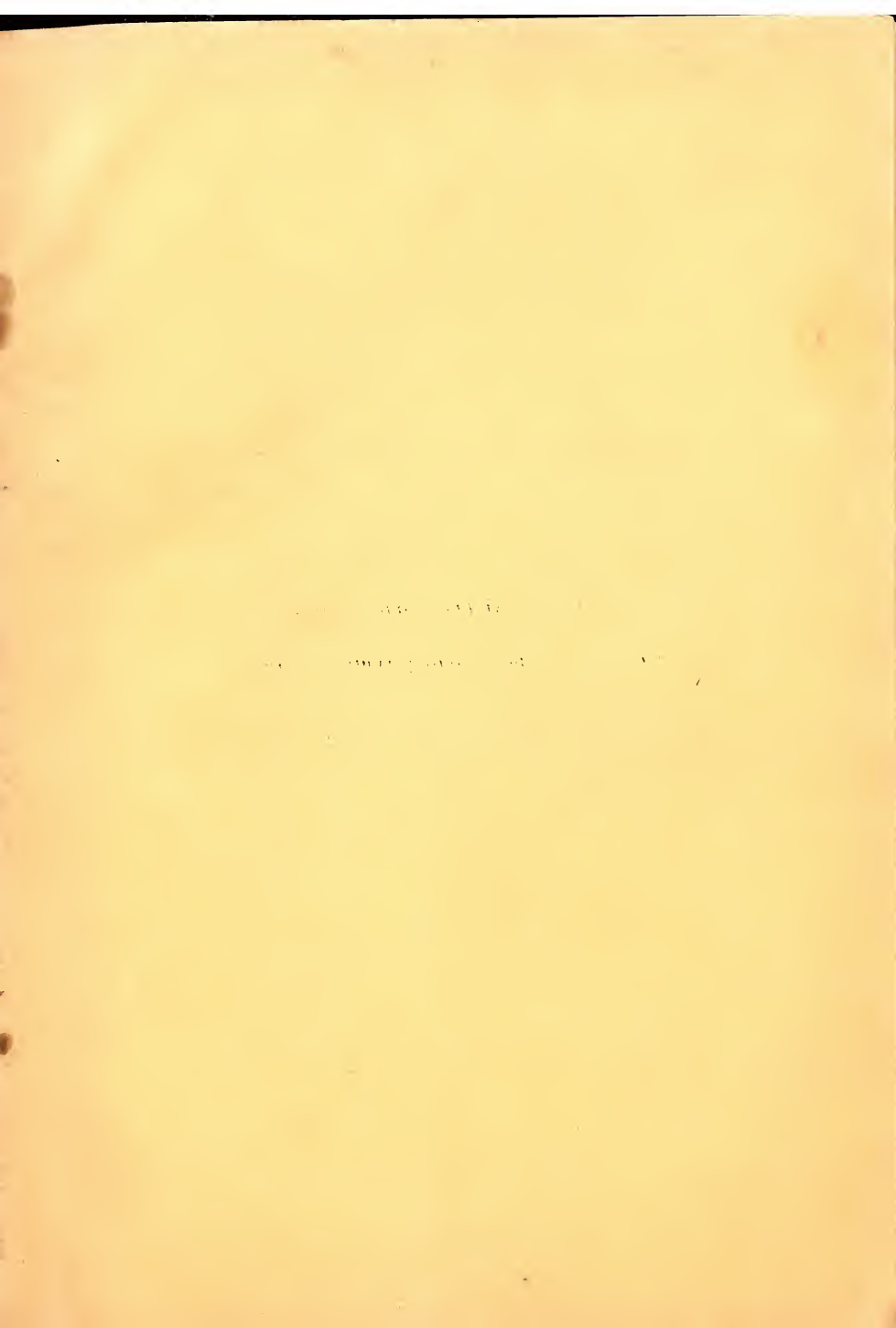
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